

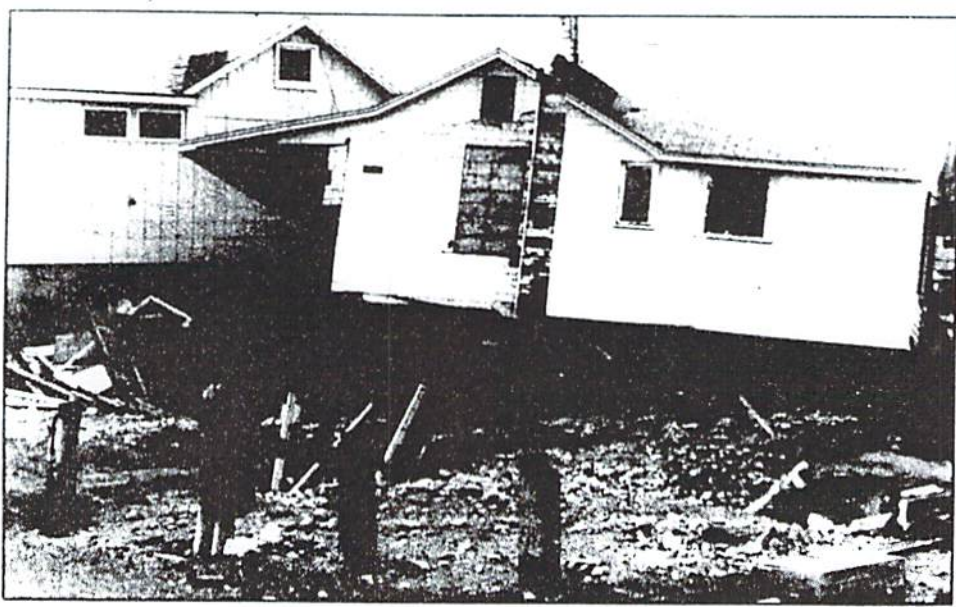
Duxbury Reporter

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Storm devastates coast



Staff photo/Charles Mathewson

Destroyed — An Ocean Road South resident assesses the waterfront damage. Nine homes in the area have been condemned. **More photos, pages 6 and 7; more stories, pages 14 and 15.**

Harbormaster: 'it blew roof off the beach'

By Sarah Love
 MPG Newspapers

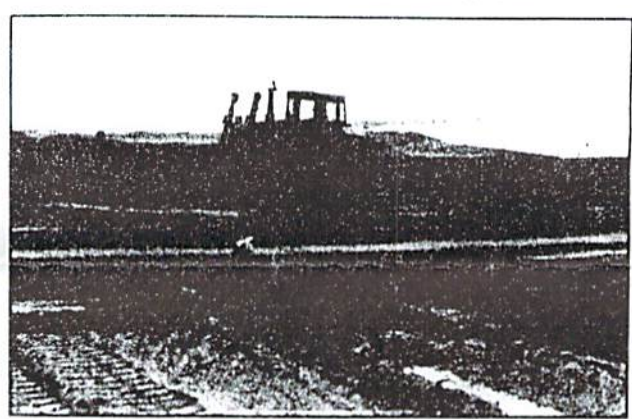
DUXBURY — Coastal property owners took the brunt of a storm that packed the most punch since the great Blizzard of '78.

While inlanders may have breathed a sigh of relief after last Wednesday's storm, coastal property owners are facing unparalleled destruction. And Duxbury's pristine, beautiful beach was severely battered and bruised by the pounding surf that reached heights of 30 feet.

Officials say there's no question that the storm was worse than the Blizzard of '78. Just how much worse they have yet to determine.

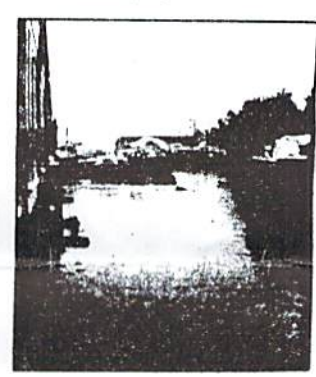
The nameless storm reduced Gurnet Road homes to lean-tos, the Gurnet Inn looked as though it was made of cardboard and the Blakeman's bath house was virtually gutted. At one point the Powder Point Bridge was under water.

Please turn to page 14



Staff photo/Sarah Love

Beach buggy — One of the 32 front end loaders works to restore Duxbury Beach Sunday.



Staff photo/Sarah Love

Marine afloat — While Bayside Marine employees pulled and moved boats the tide pushed on.

■ Storm

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Walking over what used to be the beach road, the resident and non-resident parking lots, it looked as if a nuclear disaster had hit. The area looked nothing like it did before.

On the Marshfield side, bare slumps emerged from the nearly five feet of sand and great pieces of asphalt were crumbled and appear to have floated like paper boats.

On the resident side, the land is flat, the dunes demolished and the protective fencing gone. Only the street lights dictate the area was once a parking lot. Those are the few traces of what once was.

After the tides

While the Wednesday afternoon tide caused severe flooding along the coast, at Washington Street, Powder Point Road, and King Caesar, the brunt of the damage was believed to be caused by the early Thursday morning high tide.

The National Guard, state police, and countless department of public works employees manned heavy equipment, checked identifications of people wanting to get through closed roads, and tried to clear the piles and pounds of sand that covered everything.

Thirty boats broke their moorings in the bay, which logged six to eight foot waves, and three over-30 foot sailboats were missing.

One of those boats, a 32-foot sailboat, was found days later smashed on the banks of Plymouth Beach. Harbormaster Donald Beers said the largest piece of it could have been hand carried.

Town manager Thomas Groux, touring the beach coastline everyday since the storm, estimated "at least 10 homes will have to be demolished and an undeterminable amount (have) structural damage" in the Gurnet Road area.

On Monday, building inspector Kevin MacDonald said nine homes on Gurnet Road, Ocean Road — north and south — and Lewis Court had been condemned.

There is still little known about the extent of the damage on Saquish. Part of the problem is access to assess the damage — the beach road was destroyed.

"We knew the waves would be high, but no one believed the wind would gust to hurricane force and for so long," Groux said.

Putting beach back

Standing at the east end of the Powder Point Bridge Sunday night, the eye could see for miles — see the black smoke of the dozens of front end loaders trying to create what used to be a beach.

"Ninety percent of the beach was under water at the height of the storm," Beers said in the midst of transporting Gurnet and Saquish homeowners for a visit to their property.